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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Minutes of

20 Unit Approach Task Force Meeting

May 18, 1955

Present: Aiton, Aylesworth, Callahan, Crosby, Croy, Ferguson, Frangquist, Groening, Heywood, Hogan, Huffman, Jones, Kepner, Knaus, Matthews, Phifer, Raudabaugh, Sheffield, Stone, and Vaughan.

Chairman Croy opened the meeting by explaining that its purpose was to review progress of farm and home unit approach work in each State and to discover problems with which the task force should concern itself. He then asked Sheffield to read the State progress reports submitted at the recent Southern Directors' Administrative Conference and invited comments of task force members who had visited these States recently.

The State reports and comments of task force members follows:

Alabama: New associate county agents in 20 intensive counties--associate home agents in 9 counties plus 8 men and women negro agents working with 25 farm families per county. The progress made and results obtained to date are favorable. (State report)

Miss Hogan stated many agents are critical of the detailed inventory forms required of participating families. Home agents in some counties who are working alone and who have a large regular program have been hard put to find the time needed in helping individual families make farm and home development plans.

Little group work has been attempted to date in Alabama, said Miss Hogan, but the State staff feels it has possibilities, especially following initial contacts. Increasingly, the Alabama staff is feeling the need to justify to the public the amount of time spent with a limited number of families.

Arkansas: Training of all agents has been completed. Twenty counties were selected to do intensive work on farm and home development. Have added 20 assistant county agents and 6 assistant home agents. One or two more women to be employed. Inventories and short-time and long-time plans completed with 20 to 25 farm families in each of the 20 counties. All remaining counties are setting up a minimum goal of five families to do farm and home development. Now working with 400 to 500 families. Thirty-two Arkansas agents have been selected to take three weeks' training in a special farm and home development course to be offered at the University of Arkansas this year. (State report)

Miss Hogan reported Alabama also is feeling the need to justify to the public the amount of time spent with a limited number of families on farm and home development. She added that many home agents, particularly new ones, feel a lack of sufficient training in farm and home development methods.

Phifer and Hogan stated that agents are critical of the detailed inventory forms participating families are required to fill out. Agents report that some families resist the paper work involved.

Many Arkansas farm and home development families are turning to the FHA for financial assistance. This raises the question, "Does the Extension Service have to turn them over to the FHA and discontinue working with them on farm and home development?"

Miss Hogan stated that Assistant Director Bates emphasized that the group approach will not be used in Arkansas. However, some State workers say it will be used eventually.

Florida: Have added 1 county agent, 9 assistant county agents, 5 assistant home agents, 3 home agents, 5 associate county agents, and 1 state leader. Have also added 9 part-time clerks and will employ 2 more assistant home agents and 1 assistant county agent. Have selected 8 pilot counties. Each of four associate agents assigned to 2 counties. At present, 15 families in each of the eight pilot counties have their inventories and plans well underway. Response of farm families is good. (State report)

Several new home agents have been placed in counties which never before have had home agents.

Administrator Ferguson stated that a member of the Senate appropriations committee remarked that he was pleased to see that Florida was concentrating its farm and home development work in the northern part of the State.

Georgia: Have six demonstration counties with one extension worker for each 300 farm families. The goal is for each new agent to work with 25 to 40 families on farm and home development in each of the six counties, and to try to reach and influence in some way the remaining 260 to 275 families. Have 20 new agents in 14 additional intensive counties. Agents in these counties working with 25 to 40 families on farm and home development. Georgia is expanding farm and home development work to its remaining 139 counties. (State report)

Crosby said new agents feel they have to give lots of personal service to farm and home development families. One State worker stated that most participating families wouldn't be in position to learn subject matter at general extension meetings for two or three years. Should give personal service in the meantime.

Georgia extension workers say there is some criticism of concentrating so many agents in six counties.

State reported Georgia extension leaders are enthusiastic about farm and home development.

About 1200 Georgia families now enrolled in farm and home development.

Kentucky: Some 1800 families in 68 counties enrolled in farm and home development. Will add the work in 16 counties this fall. Have employed 40 new extension workers, including 10 area agents trained to work with the agents in the 68 counties. (State report)

Crosby, Phifer, and others who have visited Kentucky recently are enthused over the progress there.

Louisiana: Have added a state leader for farm and home development. Have selected 15 parishes for intensive work with one associate county agent added in each parish. All 15 parishes have appropriated from \$300 to \$2000 each to obtain the expanded assistance. Now have from 30 to 35 families enrolled and working on their plans in each of the 14 parishes. The remaining 49 parishes are enrolling and working with 5 to 12 families each. Need more training for agents and more specialists help. Difficulty in getting home agents to become interested and to do farm and home development work. (State report)

Mississippi: Have 12 pilot counties with 24 new associate county agents and 12 new associate home agents. Have also added one assistant negro agent and one assistant negro home agent in four of these counties (8 negro agents). Have added one woman specialist. Agents in remaining 82 counties are planning to work with several farm families. Agents and farm families are enthusiastic about farm and home development and the work is well underway. (State report)

Present enrollment is nearly 1300 families, 500 of which are located in the pilot counties.

Phifer reported Mississippi is going all out to create interest in farm and home development and is making effective use of informational media in this endeavor.

Shoffield reported that more than half of Mississippi's counties have requested new agents.

North Carolina: Have selected 16 counties for intensive work. Have added 32 assistant county agents, 15 assistant home agents, and 8 subject-matter specialists. Agents in the 16 intensive counties are working with 50 to 200 farm families. Have also added 8 assistant negro county agents and 2 assistant negro home agents who will devote full time to farm and home development. Farm and home development work being favorably received. (State report)

Oklahoma: Sixteen intensive counties selected, two of which are pilot counties. Have employed 20 new agents and two irrigation specialists. Funds available to hire 4 more agents. Have set a goal of 50 farm and home development families in each of the 16 counties. The goal for the remaining 72 counties is 10 families per county. All negro agents have 25 families per county and all Indian agents are to devote full time to farm and home development. (State report)

Task force members who have visited Oklahoma reported that the work was slow in getting underway there, primarily because of the difficulty in locating and training new agents.

Puerto Rico: Have set up a state committee and held 7 one-week workshops. Have employed 29 men and 14 new women agents, and two specialists. Agents in all 67 counties participating in farm and home development. Cooperation among agents and farm families is excellent. Farm and home development work well underway. (State report)

Most of the participating families in Puerto Rico are previous FHA clients.

South Carolina: No State report

Sheffield reported farm and home development is being concentrated in six pilot counties with two associate county agents and one associate home agent per county. These agents are limiting their work to communities and are using the community improvement approach. Farm and home development work is being done with only a limited number of families. Agents placing emphasis on individual visits and in creating interest in community development.

Tennessee: Have added 16 men agents, 8 women agents, 2 specialist, and 2 assistant district agents. Several more agents will be added as soon as qualified persons can be found and trained. All 95 counties are doing farm and home development work. Have not designated pilot counties, but will set up on a partial-planning basis an average of 20 farm families in all counties this year. (State report)

Phifer stated Tennessee is concentrating on working with TVA test unit families, trying to get them to go from partial planning into complete farm and home development as rapidly as possible. Partial planning is being emphasized with new families not having any experience with TVA test unit work.

Texas: Twenty intensive counties selected. Twenty families are now enrolled and have their plans underway in each of the 20 counties. The goal this year is to enroll 50 families in each of these counties. Have completed the training of 800 extension workers in farm and home development methods. Agents in the remaining 234 counties will enroll and complete plans for an average of five families per county. Have a State committee and 12 district committees to facilitate planning, procedures, and operations. Farm and home development is being well received. (State report)

Crosby stated that, in his opinion, the plans developed in one Texas county were of very limited value.

Virginia: Have selected 16 intensive counties. Now personnel employed include 16 associate agents, 8 associate home agents, 5 home agents in counties not having a home agent, 1 woman and 1 man specialist. Eight positions not filled. Work is being done in some counties on a pilot community basis working intensively in one or more communities in each county. A few counties will extend farm and home development work over the entire county.

Larry Vaughan gave the following report of farm and home unit approach work in the Northwestern States. While the report is primarily concerned with New England States, work in other Northwestern States generally falls into one or all of the four categories listed.

FARM UNIT APPROACH IN NEW ENGLAND STATES

The following activities have been developing over a period of years. They are now a part of the county Extension program in most counties, irrespective of additional local funds. The primary purpose is to help farm families apply technical, economic and farm program information to their individual situations, and to improve their planning and decision making ability.

I. Organized Group Planning with Selected Families

This is designed to help individual families plan a complete farm and home program in line with their own goals and resources. An attempt is made to enroll families who need this type of assistance and who are ready for it. Standard forms and procedure are used in four to six meetings for eight to ten families.

II. Planning with Special Interest Groups

This is designed to help meet the management problems of specialized types of farming, and other special interest groups, such as commercial poultrymen, vegetable growers, young farmer groups, part-time farmers, etc. With some groups this may be largely farm business planning. With others, it may be family-living planning.

III. Planning with Groups to Meet Specific Problems

This is designed to help individuals meet important current problems common to a number of farmers, such as adjustments to changes in farm programs, prices, and market situations; and incorporating new things into an already well established business. Examples are--

1. Planning a forage program on dairy farms to meet individual farm needs, and adjusting the number of dairy cows and building space to the present or potential forage production.
2. Planning on when and how to shift to the bulk handling of milk.
3. Other problems of a similar nature which may become important to a group of farmers at any time.

IV. Counseling with Individual Farm Families

This is designed to help meet the requests for assistance made by individual families, many of which cannot be met through group activities. Examples are--

1. A program and operating agreement for a father-son combination.
2. A program for a family getting established on a new farm.
3. A program for a family in a critical financial situation.
4. Other problems of a similar nature.

Vaughan reported the emphasis varies from State to State. The approaches being emphasized are as follows:

Vermont -- No. 4
 Mass. -- No. 1
 Conn. -- No. 1 ... doing some on all four approaches
 Maine -- No. 1 ... pilot county basis
 N. Hamp.-- No. 4
 R. I. -- No. 4
 N. York -- No. 4 ... 15 counties
 Penna. -- No. 1 ... Statewide approach

Vaughan reported that Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, and West Virginia were longer getting started than most of the New England States but that work with selected counties was now underway. The No. 1 approach is being emphasized in these States.

